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A SURVEY OF AMERICAN HISTORY INSTRUCTION FOR DISADVANTAGED
YOUTH IN THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS.

BY- SEXTON, PATRICIA C.

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MINORITY GROUP CHILDREN, INTERVIEWS, TEACHERS, PUERTO RICANS,
NEGROES, ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

THIS PLAN FOR A SURVEY OF AMERICAN HISTORY INSTRUCTION
IN DISADVANTAGED BROOKLYN, N.Y., SCHOOLS OUTLINES THE METHODS
TO BE USED IN COLLECTING DATA. INTERVIEWS WILL BE CONDUCTED
WITH TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL, AND CITIZENS GROUPS.
INCLUDED IN THE PLAN ARE AN OUTLINE OF THE SCHEDULE AND
METHOD FOR CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS AND A LIST OF PROPOSED
SCHOOLS, WHICH SHOULD HAVE AN ENROLLMENT OF PREDOMINANTLY
NEGRO AND PUERTO RICAN STUDENTS. THIS ARTICLE IS PUBLISHED IN
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**HISTORY AND URBAN
EDUCATION**

**A FIVE-CITY SURVEY PLAN
1964-1965**

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FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN THE
NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS

Prepared by

Dr. Patricia C. Sexton
New York University

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A PLAN OF ACTION*

1) Interview cross-section of teachers (kindergarten through 2) on varying experience levels, if only primary grades are involved. If higher grades are also included, then a cross-section of the entire elementary school would be taken on selected grade levels.

2) Interviews with principals and assistant principals in selected schools.

3) Since so few of the teachers in the schools are Puerto Rican (though the student population in this district is dominantly Puerto Rican) it was suggested that all Puerto Rican teachers in the district, even those not in selected schools, should be called together in the District Superintendent's office for discussion. This would involve the calling together of NE and SAT teachers and any other Puerto Rican teachers in the schools.

4) It might be advisable to similarly call together Negro teachers in these schools if it is found that there are few in the sample selected for interviewing.

5) Citizen's groups will also be consulted. Suggested groups were: a) Parent's Association, and b) local school board members. These members comprise a good cross-section of ethnic groups in the community. The Board expressed a preference for consultation with recognized school groups rather than with organized groups of Negroes and Puerto Ricans in the community.

* This survey is to be undertaken in selected schools in Brooklyn. Plans were formulated under the direction of Mrs. Edna V. Crowley; Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Brooklyn, to whom Dr. Sexton frequently refers in this plan.

CONTENT OF INTERVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Interviews will be directed toward two general questions:

1) How can minority group children in urban schools be made to feel that they belong to the American community?

2) How can instruction in American history aid in achieving this goal?

Mrs. Crowley expressed the view that the problem of "belonging" had at least several aspects. Not only is it a question of the minority group child belonging to the larger American community, it is also a question of the child from a rather primitive rural setting belonging to the urban society. Urbanization and Americanization appear to be part of the same problem. Adaptation to urban life is as critical for minorities as adaptation to the majority society.

Most--though by no means all--Puerto Rican and Negro children in New York City Schools are new to urban life or a generation removed. American history in this context might then be conceived of as including information on the historical problems of adjustment to city life.

Teachers will be asked essentially three things:

1) What is needed in the school's history program to give minority group children a sense of belonging, and to aid their adjustment to majority and urban life?

2) What is now being done in the schools by individual teachers?

3) How can the needs be met or how can 1) (above) be implemented?

It was suggested that it is very important to allay the concern and fears of teachers and to make it clear that they are not being examined but only that the project is trying to help meet their needs as teachers. If asked what they need in the way of materials and ideas, it is felt that they will be very responsive.

NOTES ON METHOD

It was suggested that about 30 teachers per school be talked with. Emphasis might be put on the 4th grade where history is taught, but special history projects in other grades might also be discussed.

A week to two weeks should be taken for the actual survey.

Mrs. Crowley will send out notices to all principals, if desirable, requesting a listing of all textbooks being used in elementary school history instruction. It was suggested that listing of supplementary materials would be difficult to obtain from the principal but might be obtained from teacher interviews. It is also suggested that we find out how many and what kinds of books are available in the school library.

Staff: Five professionals including outside consultants, one historian, one HERO staff, no more than ten graduate students.

Method of interviewing: It is proposed that two approaches be used in interviewing: a) individual interviews with some selected teachers, and b) small group interviews (about four teachers or perhaps all the teachers at a grade level) for mutual stimulation. It is believed that this approach will encourage teachers to talk more freely and develop new ideas through interaction.

For examination:

1 - Curriculum Bulletin, Social Studies Kindergarten - Grade Two.

2 - Social Studies, Grades 7, 8, 9, Board of Education, City of New York.

PROPOSED SCHOOLS

A list of proposed schools was offered by Mrs. Crowley for purposes of preliminary research:

P.S. 147
P.S. 257
P.S. 110 (in Greenpoint)
P.S. 122

Criteria for selection:

- 1) should be predominantly Puerto Rican and Negro;
- 2) should not be too small;
- 3) should have an experienced principal rather than a new one in order to assist the researcher;
- 4) should be a mixture of segregated and non-segregated;
- 5) should not have just opened;
- 6) should not have too much experimentation going on in the school.

SCHOOLS FROM WHICH SELECTIONS MIGHT BE MADE

	<u>% Negro</u>	<u>% Puerto Rican</u>	<u>% Others</u>	<u>Register</u>	<u>Principal</u>
P.S. 147	39%	57%	4%	1300	Mr. Taub
P.S. 257	34	61	5	1300	Mr. Brande
P.S. 16	22	61	17	1322	Mrs. Newman
P.S. 17	11	63	26	1400	Dr. Simon
P.S. 110	43	15	42	750	Dr. Kessler
P.S. 122	23	64	13	1200	Mrs. Graves
P.S. 168	48	47	4	980	Mrs. Beller
P.S. 297	62	36	2	1360	Mrs. Slominsky
P.S. 37	77	13	10	800	Mrs. Klass
P.S. 19	7	82	11	1700	Mr. Bell